## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1	1. A method for tracking status of an inventory shipment sent to
2	a recipient, the method comprising:
3	monitoring whether the recipient has transmitted an electronic
4	acknowledgment of the status of the shipment; and
5	automatically transmitting a message to the recipient requesting
6	acknowledgment of receipt of inventory if the electronic acknowledgment is not
7	transmitted by the recipient within a first predetermined amount of time.
1	2. The method of claim 1 wherein the monitoring step comprises
2	monitoring whether the recipient has transmitted, via a terminal, the electronic
3	acknowledgment to a host computer in communication with the terminal.
1	3. The method of claim 2 further comprising inhibiting operation
2	of the terminal if the terminal does not print the message within a second,
3	predetermined amount of time.
1	4. The method of claim 3 further comprising restoring operation
2	of the terminal after the recipient causes the message to be printed by the terminal.
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1	5. The method of claim 2 further comprising inhibiting operation
2	of the terminal if the recipient does not respond to the message within a second,
3	predetermined amount of time.
1	6. The method of claim 5 further comprising restoring operation
2	of the terminal after the recipient responds to the message.
1	7. The method of claim 2 further comprising transmitting a notice
2	to the terminal indicating that the shipment has been sent.
1	8. A method for tracking status of an inventory shipment sent to
2	a recipient, the method comprising:

monitoring whether the recipient has transmitted, via a terminal, a
electronic acknowledgment of the status of the shipment to a host computer is
communication with the terminal;
automatically transmitting a message from the host computer to the
erminal requesting acknowledgment of receipt of inventory if the recipient does no
ransmit the electronic acknowledgment within a first predetermined amount of time
inhibiting operation of the terminal through the host computer if the
erminal does not print the message within a second, predetermined amount of time
automatically restoring operation of the terminal after the terminal
prints the message if operation of the terminal has previously been inhibited for
failure to print the message; and
automatically disabling the terminal through the host computer if the
recipient does not respond to the message within a third, predetermined amount of
ime.
9. A method for tracking an inventory shipment sent to
recipient, the method comprising:
providing the recipient with a means to electronically communicate
status of the inventory shipment to a sender of the inventory shipment.

- 10. The method of claim 9 further comprising monitoring whether the recipient has communicated the status of the inventory shipment.
- 1 1. The method of claim 10 wherein the monitoring step comprises 2 determining whether the recipient has communicated the status of the inventory 3 shipment within a predetermined amount of time.
  - 12. The method of claim 9 further comprising transmitting a notice to the recipient indicating that the shipment has been sent.
    - 13. The method of claim 9 wherein the providing step comprises providing the recipient with a terminal for electronically communicating the status of the inventory shipment, and wherein the method further comprises inhibiting

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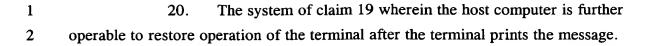
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- operation of the terminal if the recipient does not communicate the status of the inventory shipment within a predetermined amount of time.
- 1 14. The method of claim 13 further comprising restoring operation 2 of the terminal after the status of the inventory shipment has been communicated to 3 the sender.
  - 15. A system for tracking status of an inventory shipment sent to a recipient, the system comprising:

a host computer for receiving an electronic acknowledgment of receipt of inventory from the recipient, the host computer being operable to automatically transmit a message to the recipient requesting acknowledgment of receipt of inventory if the electronic acknowledgment is not received within a first predetermined amount of time.

- 16. The system of claim 15 further comprising a terminal in communication with the host computer, the terminal being operable to transmit the electronic acknowledgment to the host computer and to receive the message from the host computer.
- 17. The system of claim 16 wherein the terminal is further operative to automatically inhibit operation of the terminal if the terminal is not instructed to print the message within a second, predetermined amount of time.
- 18. The system of claim 17 wherein the terminal is further operative to automatically restore operation of the terminal after the terminal is instructed to print the message.
- 19. The system of claim 16 wherein the host computer is further operable to inhibit operation of the terminal if the recipient does not print the message within a second, predetermined amount of time.



- 21. The system of claim 16 wherein the host computer is further operable to inhibit operation of the terminal if the recipient does not respond to the message within a second, predetermined amount of time.
- 22. The system of claim 21 wherein the host computer is further operable to restore operation of the terminal after the recipient responds to the message.
- 23. The system of claim 16 wherein the host computer is further operable to transmit a notice to the terminal indicating that the shipment has been sent.
  - 24. A system for tracking status of an inventory shipment sent to a recipient, the system comprising:

a terminal for transmitting an electronic acknowledgment of receipt of inventory; and

a host computer in communication with the terminal for receiving the electronic acknowledgment, the host computer being operable to transmit a message to the terminal requesting acknowledgment of receipt of inventory if the electronic acknowledgment is not received within a first, predetermined amount of time, the host computer further being operable to inhibit operation of the terminal if the terminal does not transmit the electronic acknowledgment within a second, predetermined amount of time.